

POP STOP

COMPILED BY IAN BARTHOLOMEW



Andy Lau's internal affairs have finally been made public. PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

One of the longest media stakeouts finally came to an end this week when photos of **Andy Lau** (劉德華) and **Carol Chu** (朱麗倩) holding hands hit the front pages of the Chinese-language tabloids. Chu has long been rumored to be Lau's secret love, but the relationship had never been publicly acknowledged by either party. The image of Lau and Chu, hands firmly clasped, in Kuala Lumpur's airport on their way back to Hong Kong, was one press photographers had been waiting to capture for 24 years.

The occasion of this revelation was the funeral of Chu's father. To avoid disruption to the funeral, all references to Lau's decades-long connection with the family were omitted from the event, but Lau, for reasons that are still unclear, decided that it was time for the secret to be conclusively let out of the bag, making his first public appearance as Chu's partner.

Rumors of the relationship have long been present in the media, with many pointedly referring to Chu as Mrs Lau (劉太太), although the couple have not married. Lau's reluctance to have an acknowledged partner is closely linked with his image as one of the Chinese-speaking world's biggest male sex symbols. Based on comments left on Lau's many fan sites, it seems that fans have been overwhelmingly supportive of the star's decision to give Chu what many regard as her rightful status.

Lau's relationship with the media has never been easy given the huge interest his slightest action creates. Under pressure from Chu's family to regularize the relationship, it was reported that Lau intended to marry Chu in April, even going so far as handing over a house worth more than NT\$30 million as a dowry. Leaks to the press about the forthcoming nuptials angered Lau

to such an extent that he called the marriage off, making the particularly hurtful comment that he wasn't sure if he loved Chu enough to make the commitment of marriage.

Lau is not the only superstar who has worked hard to keep a long-standing relationship secret. **Jackie Chan's** (成龍) relationship with **Joan Lin** (林鳳嬌) was only acknowledged quite recently (though they married in 1982), partly as a result of son **Jaycee Fong** (房祖名) emerging as a celebrity in his own right. In 2000, Taiwan's own **Jackie Wu** (吳宗憲), who had long been thought to be single, was exposed as not only having a wife, but also four children, all of whom he had kept out of the media limelight. While both Wu and Chan were notorious for their numerous extramarital affairs, a situation that may have prompted their reluctance to open up about their domestic lives, Lau has never been strongly associated with any woman other than Chu. There is ongoing speculation as to whether Lau already has a child by Chu.

Meanwhile, **A-mei** (張惠妹), or rather **A-mit** (阿密特), as she is now known after the release of her new experimental album, is basking in the glow of success. Although struggling to hang on to a place in the wrong half of the Top 20, the announcement last week that her new album will be re-released with a number of cuts after the original was given an 18+ rating for the nudity and sexual content of the accompanying DVD, will give her plenty of kudos. The refrain "It's bullshit" will be removed from the song *Black Eats Black* (黑吃黑) in the new edition. In compensation, a new song with Taiwanese lyrics will be added, capitalizing on the huge popularity of the **Wu Bai** (伍佰) inspired *Come If You Dare* (好膽你就來), which also features on the album. A-mei has clearly arrived as an artist pushing at the boundaries of the acceptable in Mando-pop, though watching the unexpurgated tracks on YouTube, it's hard to see anything particularly transgressive, and A-mei's take on female domination and sex as a power game is unlikely to shock anyone but a government censor.

In other music news, Sodagreen (蘇打綠) is hemorrhaging money in the making of its upcoming album *Summer Wild* (夏·狂熱) after producer **Will Lin** (林暐哲) lost NT\$900,000 in cash he was carrying while taking care of post-production in London. Hopefully the band will be able to make some of this money back in its concerts at Taipei Arena on Sept. 19 and Sept. 20.

BY ALITA RICKARDS

MUSIC

Rub-a-dub in the hot tub



Get wet and wild with FutureMan at Lost Lagoon. PHOTO COURTESY OF PERPETUAL MOTION

PARTY NOTES:

WHAT AND WHERE: The Lost Lagoon Weekend Getaway at Dana Resort (大納農場), 100 Sinfu Rd, Sinsian Village, Wulai, Taipei County (台北縣烏來信賢村信福路90號)

WHEN: From 7pm tonight to 6pm on Sunday. Music from 9pm to 4am tonight, noon to 4am tomorrow and noon to 4pm on Sunday

ADMISSION: NT\$900 or NT\$750 with student ID for the entire weekend. NT\$600 or NT\$450 with student ID for a Saturday day pass. Tickets on sale at the door and in Taipei City at **Sababa**, 17, Ln 283, Roosevelt Rd Sec 3 (羅斯福路三段283巷17號); **Toasteria**, 2, Ln 248, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4 (忠孝東路四段248巷2號) or 1, Ln 72, Yunhe St, Taipei City (雲和街72巷1號); and **KGB**, 5, Ln 114, Shida Rd (師大路114巷5號)

GETTING THERE: NT\$100 shuttle buses run from Xindian MRT Station (新店捷運站) to the site every hour. Look for the "Perpetual Motion" sign. Shuttle buses run today from 7pm to midnight, tomorrow from noon to midnight and Sunday from noon to 6pm

ON THE NET: For more information, including driving directions in English and Chinese, visit taipeimotion.com

There is a feeling of decadence when you sit in a hot tub with dozens of your closest friends (at least in terms of proximity) drinking a cocktail and bobbing to a DJ.

Every act interviewed for this story mentioned the hot tub, with both bands and DJs playing at this weekend's Lost Lagoon blowout at Wulai craving a soak as part of their party experience.

Add three natural spring-water swimming pools, a venue surrounded by mountains and lush foliage, free camping and cabins with private hot tubs, and you have an event that combines the best of live music, electronica and a weekend out of the city.

"The DJ booth was a good size," said DJ Fratzuki, who also played at the first Lost Lagoon last year. "It allowed me to look down on the crowd [in the hot tub] which was nice." As soon as he's done his set, he plans on partying in the tub. He'll do a hip-hop rendition of one of his newest tracks as his alter ego Chinese Rapper Dom in which the Texan raps in Mandarin.

Damo Darko of Sinister Sound Syndicate also went to last year's party, though he didn't perform. He's excited to do so this year and has "loads of new material" from Mental Alloy and Hostage to remixes by Bloody Beetroots and Disco Villains. He said last year's party was a great event and he loved the vibe, but what he really enjoyed were the amenities: "The toilets were spotless which was a bonus," said Darko, who thinks the only thing dirty should be the electro.

This time around, organizers Tristan Newman and Chad Ordyne of Perpetual Motion have a more electronic focus. "It's not a long weekend," said Ordyne, "so we avoided the hassle of trying to coordinate with bands for the Friday. There are lots of DJs that we haven't worked with before.

We hope it will be fresh, with something for everyone."

New electronic acts include The Soul Sweat and Swank Show, vDub, Genetically Modified Beats, DJ Charles, Juni, Edify and Supermilkmens, with returning favorites including Marcus Aurelius and Hooker.

Two bands are flying in from Australia to perform: electric glam rock solo artist FutureMan, and God's Wounds. The latter formed last year and gained a residency at The Excelsior, in Sydney, with its Nintendo-influenced live punk-electro. Its influences include car crashes, Japanese monster movies and the Large Hadron Collider. Drummer and vocalist Muel, aka Samuel Howell, said his band is coming all the way from Oz because "a music festival set amidst hot springs sounded too good to pass up." God's Wounds will tour Taiwan over the next few months.

Rounding out the bands are Moss, Dr Reticulous Lipz, The Money Shot Horns, The Blue Trucks, Public Radio and High Tide. Rock in Hose Burlesque will also be performing two sets tomorrow.

Last year's Lost Lagoon was this reporter's top pick for parties and festivals, a sentiment shared by many. It was Perpetual Motion's first event, and though they "have learned a lot since then and are better organized" according to Ordyne, they had it right from the start, with details such as covered camping areas and free bottled drinking water. New additions this year include tents for rent, an expanded menu with falafel wraps, sandwiches and breakfast and food vendors including Mexican restaurant El Gallo. The cabins are already booked, but camping is still available free of charge.

If you see a bunch of tired happy people with prune-wrinkled toes and fingertips at Xindian MRT Station (新店捷運站) on Sunday night, you'll know where they've been.

MUSIC

BY ANDREW C.C. HUANG

Unchained melody, from Japan

Taiwan's J-pop fans have been pampered over the past year with concerts by Japanese superstars such as Ayumi Hamasaki in November and Namie Amuro in June. Tomorrow, another heavyweight act in the form of pop crooner Ryuichi Kawamura takes to the mic.

A far cry from the glitz and glamour of Hamasaki and Amuro, Kawamura was the vocalist of famed glam rock band Luna Sea (月之海) from 1989 to 2000, before embarking on a successful solo career as a balladeer.

Mostly known in Taiwan for the theme song *I For You* from the Japanese TV series *Kamisama, Mou Sukoshi Dake* (神啊!請多給我一點時間) starring Takeshi Kaneshiro (金城武) and Kyoko Fukada, Kawamura wowed fans with his smoldering voice and his matinee idol good looks.

Since the breakup of Luna Sea, Kawamura branched out to become a singer/songwriter/musician, actor and record producer. His solo debut album entitled *Love* sold 3 million copies, establishing him in 1997 as the best-selling male singer in Japan ever. As a

songwriter/producer, he is hotly pursued by other acts such as Shizuka Kudo, Noriko Sakai and Hong Kong's Kelly Chen (陳慧琳).

Kawamura's last performance in Taiwan was with Luna Sea in November 2000. Tomorrow's Ever Fadeless Melody gig is Kawamura's first solo concert here. Apart from new material from his latest album *Piano*, which was released in April, he will perform classic hits including *Love is ...*, *Ne*, *Only Love*, *Julia* and a solo rendition of *I For You*. He will perform some songs a cappella.

In the J-pop world, populated with highly packaged music acts, Kawamura is a rarity who can boast that his live performances are better than his recorded work.

Ryuichi Kawamura Live in Taiwan 2009 Ever Fadeless Melody (河村隆一2009台灣演唱會 永不褪色的旋律) is tomorrow at 7:30pm at Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall (國父紀念館), 505, Renai Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市仁愛路四段505號). Tickets are NT\$900 to NT\$3,600, available through ERA ticketing or online at www.ticket.com.tw. On the Net: www.kawamura-fc.com.



J-pop icon Ryuichi Kawamura takes over Sun Yat-sen Memorial tomorrow. PHOTO COURTESY OF YUKIANG MUSIC

RESTAURANTS

BY ALITA RICKARDS

BY NOAH BUCHAN

TIDBITS

Barefoot Beach Bar

Address: 1-9 Bajia Rd, Shihmen Township, Taipei County (台北縣石門鄉八卦路1-9號)

Telephone: (02) 2638-1567

Average meal: NT\$280 to NT\$400, not including beverages

Open: 11am to 11pm on weekdays, open until midnight (or later)

on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays

Details: Chinese and English menu; credit cards not accepted

On the Net: www.barefootbb.com



PHOTO: ALITA RICKARDS

There's truth to the old adage: "Food just tastes better when you're outdoors," and while the Barefoot Beach Bar at Baishawan (a mouthful in itself) isn't exactly outdoors, it's close enough. Nested between a seafood restaurant and a surf shop on the strip of businesses along the beach, the establishment is a welcome addition to the area.

For years the only restaurant was Hana's Beach Cafe, with sandwiches and pastas. Barefoot offers a range of choices for lunch and dinner, with plans for an all-day breakfast in the making.

The proprietors are a charming couple who are also part owners of the nearby Longhorn Bar and Grill. One gets the sense that Barefoot is their get-away spot, with the beach only really busy on weekends, when they have bands play at the bar and often stay open until 2am or later. Rock posters and beach paraphernalia adorn the walls.

Fluent in English, the owners put a lot of thought into the decor and menu. Each visit has seen improvements in both.

The bar is made of reclaimed wood from old shipping boxes, and the ceiling panels are a patchwork of stylish blues. One entire end overlooks the white-sand beach with a wooden patio and a curved counter facing the ocean. A big barbecue grill dominates one side, and oil drums covered with large table tops are surrounded by wicker chairs and colorful cushions.

As for the food, the standard beach-shack menu of French fries, hot dogs and fried chicken has been transformed with the addition of steak, kebabs, grilled salmon, smoothies and a range of salads, all priced from NT\$180 to NT\$380.

The bar has a full range of spirits, cocktails, and beers ranging from Taiwan Beer to Hoegaarden and Erdinger (NT\$120 to NT\$200). The grilled salmon (NT\$320) was a large, juicy fillet, barbecued with minimal seasoning as the tender, flaky

fish was delicious on its own. Grilled red and yellow peppers, mushrooms and onions were served on the side still firm.

The steak kebab (NT\$280) had chunks of sirloin alternating with the same vegetables — it was served too rare for my tastes but once grilled a few more minutes was juicy and flavorful with a tangy barbecue sauce. French fries are French fries but Barefoot's were addictively crispy and salty.

To top things off, a bowl of Movenpick Swiss ice cream (available in vanilla, strawberry or chocolate, NT\$100), Ballantine's whisky on the rocks (NT\$100), and a multi-hued sunset over the sparkling ocean made for a sublime combination.

Baishawan is on the Provincial Highway No. 2, also known as the Coastal Highway, in Taipei County. Take the Tamsui-Jinshan (淡水-金山) bus, which departs from the bus stop directly across from the Danshui (Tamsui) MRT Station (淡水捷運站) and get off at the Baishawan stop (白沙灣站). Buses run every 20 to 30 minutes.

American-style restaurants serving delicious and affordable fare have been popping up all across the southeastern part of Taipei over the past few years, providing young crowds with a taste for belt-busting burgers and oversized breakfasts.

Situated in an alley behind California Fitness on Zhongxiao East Road (忠孝東路), the recently opened Hook follows this trend but focuses its culinary attention on a dish that is generally overlooked by these restaurants: the hot dog.

The 14 varieties on offer include the German-style hot dog with onions and pickles (NT\$100), the BBQ chicken dog with onions (NT\$180) and the Mexican salsa dog with salsa, basil and jalapenos (NT\$130). There are also more adventurous creations such as the Korean hot dog with Korean pickles (NT\$150), the curry hot dog topped with curry sauce (NT\$150) and the tuna salad dog with tomatoes, onion and lettuce (NT\$150). Add NT\$80 to any of these dishes and your meal arrives with a beverage and French fries.

The chili dog with onions and jalapenos (NT\$150) that I opted for arrived with a moderate amount of thick-cut and lightly salted French fries and a creamy and rich tartar sauce to dip them in.

Though the amount of fries

didn't match my idea of American excess, Hook smothered the frankfurter with chili, which was a spicy combination of chunks of onion, ground beef and pickled jalapeno in a robust sauce topped with jalapeno slices. I found myself happily negotiating my way through the mound of chili with a fork. The tartar sauce was a nice accompaniment to the fries and helped cool down the burning sensation caused by the jalapenos.

Though Hook concentrates on doing its hot dogs up right (albeit expensively, especially when compared with Gusto Street Hot Dogs, across the street from the Diner on Ruian Street (瑞安街), which now opens only on weekends), the waitstaff seem easily distracted.

After I ordered lunch, a server brought three plates of food downstairs for the table next to me and, rather than

serving them immediately, placed them on the bar to answer the phone.

After the phone conversation, two customers brought their bill to the bar, paid, chatted with the server and left. Having sat on the bar for about 10 minutes, the dishes were finally delivered to the table — a process that took less than 15 seconds. I was left wondering about the 10 percent service charge.

Perhaps this distraction has something to do with the restaurant's design. Servers spend much of their time negotiating the stairs between the kitchen on the first floor and the basement eating area below.

Along with hot dogs, Hook's menu also features pub-style appetizers such as onion rings (NT\$100), spicy chicken wings (NT\$180) and fried mozzarella sticks (NT\$160), as well as a handful of burgers.



Hot dogs! Get your hot dogs right here! PHOTO: NOAH BUCHAN, TAIPEI TIMES

Hook

Address: B1, 1, Alley 7, Ln 205, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段205巷7弄1號 B1) **Telephone:** (02) 2771-7107 **Open:** 11:30am to 2am **Average meal:** NT\$280 **Details:** Chinese and English menu; credit cards not accepted

Spanish molecular gastronomy chef Daniel Negreria Berceo of El Toro in Zhongxiao East Road is taking over The Den at Barcode from Mondays through Thursdays beginning next week.

Food will be served from 9pm until 12:30am (or later).

"In Spain and some parts of Europe, people eat later. We aim to introduce that concept to Taiwan," said Matt Chang (張世和), Barcode's manager. "Patrons can come here, eat decent food late and stay for drinks after. It's a one-stop nightspot."

The menu consists of two sets, which will change every two months. Set 1, which is NT\$680 and until the end of October consists of clam stick salad with sea water foam and pistachio vinaigrette; leek soup with egg yolk and crispy ham; saute shrimp and creamy rice with bee pollen; Norwegian salmon with pesto cream and "fake" roe; roast duck breast with bitter orange and dark chocolate; and pineapple ravioli stuffed with dried tomato. Set 2 is NT\$880 for crab meat salad with crispy banana; creamy asparagus soup with apple flowers; stuffed squid three ways, black rice, caramelized onion and traditional vinaigrette; wild mushroom risotto with seared duck liver and Parmesan; stuffed chicken with pine nuts and balsamic vinegar; and wild-blueberry foam with white chocolate.